

**HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF**

SB 483 - Criminal Procedure - Automated Expungement (Clean Slate Act of 2026)

**Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 17, 2026**



Health Care for the Homeless strongly supports SB 483, Clean Slate Act of 2026, because it will help end homelessness by reducing barriers to employment and housing. SB 483 rightly recognizes that individuals should not continue to be penalized or stigmatized for charges that our public policy has determined should be expunged.

Criminal records, including records eligible for expungement, create almost insurmountable barriers to obtaining employment, housing, education, and other critical resources like social safety net programs.¹ At Health Care for the Homeless, our clients have been denied gainful employment even due to having non-convictions on their record, causing them into homelessness or to remain homeless. This was the case with one of our clients, Stephanie.² In 2004, Stephanie was charged with a number of offenses, all of which were dismissed. Stephanie has tried for 15 years to find gainful employment, as a single mother who is homeless. She has been denied employment numerous times directly because of her criminal record. These employers explicitly cited her non-convictions as the reason to deny her employment. Such a criminal background, convictions or not, prevent individuals from financial stability and harm Maryland families. Non-convictions are just one such example of policies that individuals have a right to expunge in Maryland, but for any number of reasons, have not yet gone through the expungement process. Such records should unquestionably be automatically expunged as a matter of public policy.

SB 483 helps realize existing Maryland law. Our State has determined that it is prudent public policy to create a pathway for certain charges and dispositions to be expunged. The Clean Slate Act of 2026 streamlines this process and helps make this important public policy a reality for Marylanders. This is an overdue and much-needed step towards ending homelessness in our State. We urge a favorable report by the Committee.

Health Care for the Homeless is Maryland's leading provider of integrated health services and supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We deliver medical care, mental health services, state-certified addiction treatment, dental care, social services, housing support services, and housing for over 11,000 Marylanders annually at sites in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

Our Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.

Our Mission: We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.

For more information, visit www.hchmd.org.

¹ See American Public Health Association, *Housing and Homelessness as a Public Health Issue* (Nov. 2017), available at <https://apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2018/01/18/housing-and-homelessness-as-a-public-health-issue>.

² To maintain confidentiality, we did not use the client's real name.